

Prepared Testimony to the Senate Armed Services Committee

By Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld, Thursday, June 21, 2001.

Introduction

Mr. Chairman, thank you for calling this hearing. Since coming into office five months ago, I have been asking a great many questions and discussing a number of key issues regarding how our Armed Forces might be best arranged to meet the new security challenges of the 21st Century. I appreciate the opportunity to report to you on our progress.

Later this month, I will be available to discuss the 2002 budget amendment. But before we get to budgets, I think it would be useful to discuss the larger strategic framework, and our efforts to craft a defense strategy appropriate to the threats and challenges we will surely face in the 21st Century.

?? As you know, we have conducted a number of studies, many of which have been briefed to you, including missile defense, space, transformation, conventional forces, and morale and quality of life.

?? We have just completed a month of consultations with our friends and allies on the new and different security challenges we will face in the 21st Century. President Bush has returned from a successful tour of Europe. His trip was preceded by visits to NATO and Western capitals by Secretary Powell, myself and other administration officials, during which we discussed how best to move beyond the Cold War, and prepare together for the emerging threats we will all face in this new and still dangerous century.

?? And we have also begun a notable process within the Defense Department. Over the past several weeks, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Vice Chairman, each of the Service Chiefs of Staff, on occasion the CINCs, and the few senior civilian officials in the Department who have been confirmed, held a series of meetings to discuss the U.S. defense strategy. We did not include staff, and met daily, two to three hours at a time, often on weekends – for a total of some 20-25 hours -- to produce detailed strategy guidance for the execution of the Congressionally-mandated Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR).

That senior group of military and civilian officials has agreed on some ideas that could become a new strategy and a force sizing approach. Over the next 6-8 weeks, we will test those ideas through the QDR process against different scenarios and models, and will discuss our ideas and findings with the members of this Committee. By later this summer and early Fall, we will know whether we have something we can confidently recommend to the President, the National Security Council and the Congress, and which will help us prepare the 2003 budget.

Strategic Environment

In approaching these discussions, we began with the fact that at present we are enjoying the benefits of the unprecedented global economic expansion — an expansion driven by information technology, innovative entrepreneurs, the spread of democracy, free economic systems, and the growth of societies that respect individual liberty and reward individual initiative.

But we cannot have a prosperous world unless we first have a peaceful world. The security and stability that the U.S. armed forces provide is the critical underpinning of that peace and prosperity. If we cannot defend against aggression, and contribute to stability, we put at risk our current favorable circumstance.

Imagine, for a moment, what might happen if a rogue state demonstrated the capability to attack U.S. or European populations with nuclear, chemical or biological weapons of mass destruction? A policy of intentional vulnerability by the Western nations could give rogue states the power to hold our people hostage to nuclear blackmail – in an effort to prevent us from projecting force to stop aggression.

In the event of a hostile threat by one of these states, we would have three unpleasant choices: acquiesce and allow it to invade its neighbors (as Iraq invaded Kuwait); oppose the threat and put Western population centers at risk; or be forced to take pre-emptive action.

Intentional vulnerability could make building coalitions against aggression next to impossible. At worst, it could lead to a rise in isolationism – something that would surely damage economic progress in our still dangerous world.

So if we are to extend this period of peace and prosperity, we need to prepare now for the new and different threats we will face in the decades ahead – not wait until they fully emerge. Only if we act now will we be able to live in peace in that quite different world.

Our challenge in doing so is complicated by the fact that we cannot know precisely who will threaten us in the decades ahead. As I discussed with the defense ministers at NATO, the only thing we know for certain is that it is unlikely that any of us knows what is likely. Consider the track record during my lifetime:

- ?? I was born in 1932, the Great Depression was underway, and the defense planning assumption of the mid-1930s was "No war for ten years."
- ?? By 1939, World War II had begun in Europe, and in 1941 the fleet the U.S. constructed to deter war became the first target of a naval war of aggression in the Pacific. Airplanes did not exist at the start of the century, but by World War II, bombers, fighters, transports and other aircraft had become common military instruments that critically affected the outcome of the war, and, in the Battle of Britain, a nation's fate was decided in the skies.
- ?? Soon thereafter, the Atomic Age had shocked the world. By the 1950's our World War II ally, the Soviet Union, had become our Cold War adversary, and, with little warning, we were, to our surprise, at war in Korea.
- ?? In the early 1960s few had focused on Vietnam; by the end of the decade the U.S. was embroiled in a long and costly war there.
- ?? In the mid-1970s Iran was a key U.S. ally and the regional power; a few years later, Iran was in the throes of anti-Western revolution and the champion of Islamic fundamentalism.
- ?? In March of 1989, when Vice President Cheney appeared before the U.S. Senate for his confirmation hearings as Secretary of Defense, not one person uttered the word "Iraq." Within a year, he was preparing the U.S. for war in the Persian Gulf.

That recent history should make us humble. It tells me that the world of 2015 will almost certainly be little like today and, without doubt, notably different from what today's experts are confidently forecasting.

But while it is difficult to know precisely who will threaten, or where, or when in the coming decades, it is less difficult to anticipate how we will be threatened. We know, for example, that:

- ?? Our open borders and open societies make it easy and inviting for terrorists to strike at our people where they live and work.
- ?? Our dependence on computer-based information networks make those networks attractive targets for new forms of cyber-attack.
- ?? The ease with which potential adversaries can acquire advanced conventional weapons will present us with new challenges in conventional war and force projection, and may give them new capabilities to deny the U.S. access to forward bases.

- ?? Our lack of defenses against ballistic missiles creates incentives for missile proliferation which – combined with the development of nuclear, chemical and particularly biological weapons of mass destruction – could give future adversaries the incentive to try to hold our populations hostage to terror and blackmail.

There are some important facts which are not debatable: The number of countries that are developing nuclear, chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction is growing. The number of ballistic missiles on the face of the earth, and the number of countries possessing them is growing as well.

Consider that:

- ?? In 1972, the number of countries pursuing biological weapons was unknown; today there are at least thirteen we know of, and they are of increasing sophistication and lethality;
- ?? In 1972, ten countries had chemical programs we knew of; today there are sixteen (four countries ended their chemical weapons programs, but 10 more jumped in to replace them;)
- ?? In 1972, we knew of only five countries that had nuclear weapons programs; today we know of twelve;
- ?? In 1972, we assessed a total of nine countries as having had ballistic missiles; today we know of twenty-eight.
- ?? And note that those are only the cases we know of. There are dangerous capabilities being developed at this moment that we do not know about, and may not know about for years, in some cases until after they are deployed. That has been the case in the past, and despite our best efforts, we must understand that it is the case today.

This proliferation of dangerous technologies is aided by the same globalization that is helping to fuel our current prosperity. Just as we see growing interdependence within the free world, there is also a growing interdependence among the world's rogue states. Those states are sharing information, technology, weapons material and know-how at a rapid pace.

What all this means is that soon, for the first time in history, individuals who have no structure around them to serve as a buffer on their decision-making will possess nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, and the means to deliver them.

This presents a very different challenge from that of the Cold War. Even in the old Soviet Union, the Secretary General of the Communist Party, dictator though he was, had a Politburo to provide some checks and balances that might have kept him from using those weapons at his whim. What checks and balances are there on Saddam Hussein or Kim Jong Il? None that we know of or can influence. No one can be certain how they would behave in a crisis, but we know they lack the constraints of a democracy.

We know from experience that they have already demonstrated a willingness to use these weapons. Saddam Hussein used gas on his own people, fired ballistic missiles against Israel and Saudi Arabia during the Gulf War, and has an aggressive nuclear program. Iran has recently used ballistic missiles to strike opposition bases in Iraq. So using these kinds of weapons does not seem to offend their sensibilities.

But we must remind ourselves that these weapons do not have to be used to alter behavior. The regimes seeking ballistic missiles and nuclear, chemical and biological weapons see them not only as weapons to use in war, but as tools of coercion – means by which they can intimidate their neighbors and prevent others from projecting force to defend against aggression.

The countries pursuing these technologies are often poor -- in the case of North Korea, starving -- but they are determined. They are taking funds that could provide basic sustenance to their people in some cases, and improve the quality of life in others, and investing those funds in ballistic missile technology and weapons of mass destruction. And they are doing it for a purpose: because they have decided it is very

much in their interest, and strengthens their influence in the world. They are doing it because they believe that they can use these weapons to deter us from acting in ways contrary to their interests.

That is why they are not constrained by diplomatic efforts to halt their programs; they are not constrained by international "norms" and arms control regimes; and we cannot rely on them being deterred by the threat that we would use nuclear retaliation against the people of their countries they in effect hold hostage – the Mutually Assured Destruction concept that contributed to stability with the Soviet Union during the Cold War. These are very different regimes.

While this trend in proliferation is taking place, we are also seeing another trend unfold that has both negative and positive aspects: the increasing power, range and sophistication of advanced conventional weapons.

If harnessed by us, these advanced weapons can help us to extend our current peace and security well into the new century. If harnessed by our adversaries, however, these technologies could lead to unpleasant surprises in the years ahead -- and could allow hostile powers to undermine our current prosperity and our ability to contribute to peace.

Future adversaries may use these advanced conventional capabilities to deny us access to distant theaters of operation. And, as they gain access to a range of new weapons that allow them to expand the "deadly zone" to include our territory, infrastructure, space assets, population, friends, and allies, we may find future conflicts are no longer restricted to their region of origin.

For all these reasons, a new approach to deterrence is needed. We are living in a unique period in history, when the Cold War threats have receded, but the dangerous new threats of the 21st Century have not yet fully emerged. We need to take advantage of this period to ensure that we are prepared for the challenges we will certainly face in the decades ahead.

The new threats are on the horizon. And with the speed of change today -- where technology is advancing not in decades but in months and years -- we cannot afford to wait until they have emerged before we prepare to meet them.

After the new threats emerge, this opportunity may not be available. The risks of transformation could be much greater then -- perhaps unacceptably so.

Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR)

With this security situation in mind, our team at the Pentagon has been working to develop the appropriate defense strategy for the coming decades. Our goal was to provide clear strategic guidance and ideas for the Congressionally-mandated Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR).

Working with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Vice Chairman and Service Chiefs, we have had extensive discussions and worked through some complex issues. We have now provided guidance to test some preliminary conclusions over the next two months, before making any recommendations to the President or Congress.

As we began our review, I asked the members of our group to think about and answer a series questions. These included:

- How do we measure and balance the various risks?
- How can we best size and organize the force?
- What key capabilities does the U.S. currently lack or does not have in sufficient maturity that are essential?

- What should DoD be doing with respect to homeland defense?
- What types of small-scale contingency operations are we likely to face, and how many?
- How can readiness measurements be improved?

One of the key questions before us is whether to keep the two nearly simultaneous "Major Theater War" (MTW) force-sizing construct.

I must say at the outset that suggestions that the "two nearly-simultaneous Major Theater War" approach has been scrapped are not correct. I am a careful person and believe you don't replace what is until you have something better -- and we do not yet know whether the construct the QDR will examine will be better. It will be after the QDR before we will be in a position to make a recommendation.

The two MTW approach was an innovation at the end of the Cold War. It was based on the proposition that the U.S. should prepare for the possibility that two regional conflicts could arise at the same time. If the U.S. were engaged in a conflict in one theater, an adversary in a second theater might try to gain his objectives before the U.S. could react. Prudence dictated that the U.S. take this possibility into account.

Based on this proposition, the two MTW approach served as a basis for sizing the force, that is, each of the Services to include their active and reserve components. The two MTW approach identified both Southwest Asia and Northeast Asia as areas of high national interest to the U.S. In both regions, regimes hostile to the U.S. and its allies and friends possessed the capability and had exhibited the intent to gain their objectives by the threat or use of force.

The approach identified the "force packages" that would be needed for the U.S. to achieve its wartime objectives should two, nearly simultaneous conflicts erupt. These force packages were based on an assessment of the combat capabilities and likely operations of an adversary, on the one hand, and the capabilities and doctrine of U.S. forces -- so recently displayed in Desert Storm -- on the other.

The two MTW approach served well in that period. It provided a guidepost for reshaping and resizing the force from one oriented to a global war with a nuclear superpower, to a smaller force focused on smaller regional contingencies.

But when one examines that approach today, several things stand out:

- ?? First, because we have underfunded and overused our forces, we find we are short a division, we are short airlift, we have been underfunding aging infrastructure and facilities, we are short high-demand/low-density assets, the aircraft fleet is aging at considerable and growing cost to maintain, the Navy is declining in numbers, and we are steadily falling below acceptable readiness standards. I have no doubt that should two nearly simultaneous conflicts occur that we would prevail in both. But the erosion in the capability of the force means that the risks we would face today and tomorrow are notably higher than they would have been when the two MTW standard was established.
- ?? Second, we have skimped on our people, doing harm to their trust and confidence, as well as to the stability of our force. Without the ability to attract, train and retain the best men and women, the U.S. Armed Forces will not be able to do their job. We cannot continue to skimp on our people if we are to have a first-class force for the 21st Century.
- ?? Third, we have under invested in dealing with future risks. We have failed to invest adequately in the advanced military technologies we will need to meet the emerging threats of the new century. Given the long lead-times in development and deployment of new capabilities, waiting further to invest in 21st Century capabilities will pose an unacceptable risk. We are, in essence, risking our future security.
- ?? Fourth, we have not addressed the growing institutional risks -- the waste, inefficiency and distrust that result from the way DoD functions will, over time erode public support to the detriment of our nation.

- ?? And fifth, an approach that prepares for two major wars, by its very nature, focuses military planning on the near-term, to the detriment of preparing for longer-term threats. Because we can't predict threats of the future, we tend not to plan for them. As a result, too much of today's military planning is dominated today by what one scholar of Pearl Harbor called "a poverty of expectations – a routine obsession with a few dangers that may be familiar rather than likely."

But the likely dangers of this new century may be quite different from the familiar dangers of the past century. A new construct may be appropriate to help us plan for the unfamiliar and increasingly likely threats we will face in the decades ahead.

We also know that in the decade since the two MTW approach was fashioned, we have not had two major regional wars – which, of course, is good and may well be an indication of the success of the approach. On the other hand, we have done a host of other things, such as Haiti, Bosnia, Kosovo, non-combatant evacuations, humanitarian missions, etc.

All of this led our team to the conclusion that we owed it to the President and the country to ask the question whether the two nearly simultaneous Major Theater War approach remains the best one for the period ahead.

That said, in deciding how to proceed, we recognized that, if we decided to move beyond the two MTW strategy, we would need to substitute something better and not just undertake change for change's sake. To those who would tear down what is, falls the responsibility of recommending something better.

So we set in motion a process that has not been tried before. Knowing that any change in our approach would unquestionably require the military advice and commitment of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, the Vice Chairman, the Service Chiefs of Staff, and the regional and functional CINCs, I asked them to see if we could, together, fashion a proposal that we believed might better serve the country than the two MTW approach. The QDR process could then test that alternative against the two MTW approach to see whether we believed we had found something we might recommend to the President and the Congress as a way ahead for the future.

It has been an intensive process. I have learned a great deal. I don't suggest that we have yet found something better to recommend. What we have found is something that at least we think may be better, and we are offering for testing in the QDR process.

The approach we will test will balance the current risks to the men and women in the Armed Forces, the risks to meeting current operational requirements, and the risks of failing to invest for the future, by using this period of distinct U.S. advantage to:

- ?? Set us on a path to recover from the investment shortfalls in people, morale, infrastructure, equipment, op tempo, etc., so we are able to attract and retain the talents needed for a modern force;
- ?? Invest in the future capabilities that will be critical if the U.S. is to be able to reassure allies and friends, and to deter and defeat potential adversaries armed with advanced technologies, vastly more lethal weapons, and a range of methods of threatening their use.

While undertaking these overdue investments, the U.S. must assure its ability to:

- ?? Defend the United States;
- ?? Maintain deployed forces forward to reassure friends and allies, to pursue security cooperation, to deter conflict and to be capable of defeating the efforts of any adversary to achieve its objectives by force or coercion, repelling attacks in a number of critical areas, and also be capable of conducting a limited number of smaller-scale contingencies; while

- ?? Assuring the capability to win decisively against an adversary threatening U.S. vital interests, anywhere in the world.

This approach takes account of the following:

- ?? The threat to the U.S. has increased. Terrorism and attacks by special operations forces, including the use of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, is a growing concern. Cyber-attacks are increasing. The threat of ballistic and cruise missile attack is increasing. Allied and friendly nations are also at increased risk. A new defense strategy would need to take this growing and increasingly complex threat into account, and provide forces to address it.
- ?? Within the areas of critical concern to the U.S., the threat is evolving as well. Nations are arming themselves with a variety of advanced technology systems, from quiet submarines armed with high-speed torpedoes, and cruise missiles to air defense radars to satellite jamming capabilities. The development and integration of these capabilities are clearly designed to counter those military capabilities which provide the U.S. its current military advantage.
- ?? Moreover, warfare is now conducted on short timelines. Adversaries understand that their success may turn on their ability to achieve their objectives before the U.S., and its allies and friends, can react.
- ?? Given these developments, we believe there is reason to explore enhancing the capabilities of our forward deployed forces in different regions to defeat an adversary's military efforts with only minimal reinforcement. We believe this would pose a stronger deterrent in peacetime, allow us to tailor forces for each region and provide capability to engage and defeat adversaries' military objectives wherever and whenever they might challenge the interests of the U.S. and its allies and friends.
- ?? In the end, however, the U.S. must have the capacity to win decisively against an adversary. The U.S. must be able to impose terms on an adversary that assure regional peace and stability – including, if necessary, the occupation of an adversary's territory and change of its regime.

This strategy and approach has been designed to assure that the U.S. invests in the force for the future to assure that we have the necessary margin of safety needed in the 21st century, while, at the same time, assuring the ability to deal with likely threats over the nearer term.

Such a strategy may result in a change in our approach to smaller-scale contingencies. It could also require some modifications in war plans as to timing and war termination goals. A range of options to address these issues and consider these questions is the task of the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR).

Contending with uncertainty must be a centerpiece of U.S. defense planning. Because of the uncertainty about the future strategic environment, this strategy would combine both "threat-based" and "capabilities based" planning, using a "threat-based" planning to address near-term threats, while turning increasingly to a "capabilities-based" approach to make certain we develop forces prepared for the longer-term threats that are less easily understood.

Under such an approach we would work to select, develop and sustain a portfolio of U.S. military capabilities – capabilities that could not only help us prevail against current threats, but, because we possess them, dissuade potential adversaries from developing dangerous new capabilities.

Some of the investment options we have discussed include:

- People. No matter how advanced we become technologically, people will always be the backbone of our defense. Smart weapons require smart soldiers
- Experimentation, including the creation of innovative military units.
- Intelligence, to provide insight about the intentions of potential adversaries and warning of impending attacks and emerging capabilities;

- Space, to provide nearly continuous space-based coverage of critical areas of the world to support both civilian and military decision-makers and operators, and to develop and field capabilities to monitor objects in space and protect U.S. space systems;
- Missile Defense, to be able to defend the United States, our friends and allies and forward deployed forces;
- Information Operations, which need to be increasingly integrated into operations in peacetime, crisis and wartime;
- Pre-conflict management tools, to mitigate the chance of war by deterring conflict and influencing the choices of decision-makers;
- Precision strike, to enable the U.S. to strike targets rapidly, on a global basis, carrying larger payloads of weapons, with a higher-degree of discrimination;
- Rapidly Deployable Standing Joint Forces, for forward presence in peacetime and to permit and sustain operations across the spectrum of military missions, including entry into areas where adversaries seek to deny access;
- Unmanned systems, including robotic ground, air, sea and space sensors and vehicles;
- Command, Control, Communications and Information Management, to rapidly transmit secure information in support of joint forces;
- Strategic mobility, to project U.S. combat power rapidly;
- Research and development base, to ensure the U.S. military maintains an asymmetric advantage over adversaries and to hedge against an uncertain future and the potential for surprise;
- Infrastructure and logistics, to ensure DoD has modern, ready and effective installations to support operations and maintenance of U.S. forces.

The portfolio of capabilities, in combination with a new strategy, could help us to meet four defense policy goals:

- ?? First, to assure our friends and allies that we can respond to unexpected dangers and the emergence of new threats, that we will meet our commitments to them, that it is both safe and beneficial to cooperate with the United States, and, by the same token, that it is possible to find ways to resist intimidation and blackmail by others;
- ?? Second, to the extent possible, dissuade potential adversaries from developing threatening capabilities, by developing and deploying capabilities that reduce their incentives to compete;
- ?? Third, deter potential adversaries from hostile acts, and counter coercion against the U.S., its forces, its friends and its allies;
- ?? Fourth, should deterrence and dissuasion fail, defend the United States, our forces abroad, our friends and allies against any adversary, and, if so instructed, decisively defeat an adversary at the time, place and manner of our choosing.

These are some of the issues we have put in the QDR process to examine and test. As the QDR process moves forward, we will continue to consult with Congress, and expect by late this summer to make recommendations to the President.

At that point the President will make some decisions and recommendations that may involve balancing some near-term risks, in order to secure long-term gains. They may involve forgoing certain advantages during his presidency, so that his successors -- and succeeding generations of Americans -- will have the new capabilities that will be needed to make America more secure in more dangerous times.

We will likely present the President with a range of options. Once the President weighs those options, and makes decisions on changes to the current strategy, if any, those decisions will inform the development of 2003 budget, where decisions on weapons systems will have to be addressed in the context of the strategy selected. We will present that budget to Congress in January, 2002.

Let me underscore, once again, that we have not yet decided on a new strategy. We are considering and testing a different strategy, and variants of that strategy, against the current one. We will continue to consult with you as the QDR process approaches completion in September, and we will then come to conclusions about the desirability of a new defense strategy.

But I must add: the current strategy is not working. So we owe it to ourselves to ask the question: what might be better?

And if and when we decide on something better, we then need to figure out how we get from where we are to where we need to go. Some of the questions we must address include: Do we simply modernize our current force to meet current threats? Or do we begin transforming our force for future threats? If so, what short-term risks are we willing to run, for the long-term gains.

Preparing for the 21st century will not require immediately transforming the entire U.S. military—just a portion. The Blitzkrieg was an enormous success, but it was accomplished by only a 13% transformed German army. And in some instances, transformation may not require new capabilities at all, but rather new ways of arranging, connecting and using existing capabilities.

CONCLUSION

Change is difficult. Changing the Defense Department is like turning a great aircraft carrier -- it does not turn on a dime.

But the greatest threat to our position today is complacency. Thankfully, Americans no longer wake up each morning and fret about the possibility of a thermonuclear exchange with the old Soviet Union. They look at the world, and see peace, prosperity and opportunity ahead of them.

We need the humility to recognize that, while America has capabilities, we are not invulnerable – and our current situation is not a permanent condition. If we don't act now, new threats will emerge to surprise us, as they have so often in the past. The difference is that today weapons are vastly more powerful.

Mr. Chairman, I have spent the past 25 years in business. Any successful executive will confirm that the safest and best time for a business to adapt is when it is on top – and the most dangerous is to wait until an innovative competitor comes along and finds a way to attack your position.

Today America is strong; we face no immediate threat to our existence as a nation or our way of life; we live in an increasingly democratic world, where our military power – working in concert with friends and allies – helps contribute to peace, stability, and growing prosperity. Indeed, it is the underpinning of world economic prosperity.

But simply hanging on and simply doing more of the same could be a serious mistake.

My hope is to work with you, Mr. Chairman, and the members of the House and Senate. That is why I am here today to discuss these matters. That is why we have undertaken these consultations with our allies, and the intensive discussions with our senior military leaders.

We are not here with all the answers. Getting the strategy right will require a dialogue. I look forward working together with the members of this Committee to find the right answers.

But let's begin with the understanding that the task is worth doing. A window of opportunity is open to us. But the world is changing, and unless we change we will find ourselves facing new and daunting threats we did not expect and will be unprepared to meet.

During the Civil War, a Union General named John Sedgewick stood surveying his Confederate adversary across the battlefield. Confident of his superior position, he turned to an aide and said, "They couldn't hit an elephant at this distance." A moment later, a sharpshooter's bullet struck him under his left eye, killing him instantly.

Complacency can kill. Thank you.